

CLAIMS

1. A content-provider entity for providing content to media channels established in respect of a network communication session, the content-provider entity comprising:

- 5 - an entity manager for receiving, in respect of a particular communication session, context data about the session and channel information about the channels established for the session including the media types carried by the channels and channel connection details;
- a transport subsystem for establishing, in accordance with the channel information received by the entity manager, media channel connections to a session transport mechanism associated with said session; and
- a media subsystem providing a respective media handler of appropriate type for each media channel connection established by the transport subsystem, each media handler serving to deliver media content of its associated type from a media source to the corresponding channel connection, and the media subsystem further including a delivery controller for controlling the selection and delivery of media content through the media handlers in dependence on said context data.

2. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, further comprising a content library providing media sources of different media type for use by the media handlers.

3. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, wherein said context data comprises an indication of a target subject, the delivery controller using this indication to determine at least the initial content to be delivered on the media channel connections.

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4. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, wherein said context data comprises the identity of a party already joined to the session, the delivery controller using this identity to query a database about that party, the delivery controller using the query results to determine at least the initial content to be delivered on the media channel connections.

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5. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, wherein the delivery controller is operative to cause content to be simultaneously delivered across multiple channel connections.
- 5 6. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, wherein content delivery is non-interactive with respect to any other entity joined to the communication session, the delivery controller periodically causing new content to be delivered.
- 10 7. A content-provider entity according to claim 1, wherein the content delivered has active components enabling a party joined to the session to provide input regarding what content should be further delivered, said input being received by the content-provider entity and used to controlled subsequent content delivery on one or more channels.
- 15 8. In combination, a content-provider entity according to any one of the preceding claims and a service system for setting up a communication session with an associated transport mechanism allowing the exchange of data, via multiple data transfer channels for different media types, between endpoint entities joined to the session; the service system, in setting up a communication session, creating a service-session functional entity for controlling the joining of endpoint entities to the session in accordance with a predetermined service behaviour, and the service-session functional entity being responsible for joining the content-provider entity to the session as required by said service behaviour, this joining involving the sending of said context data and channel information to the content-provider entity.
- 20 25 9. The combination of claim 8, wherein the service session functional entity is operative to join the content-provider entity to the session during a period when an existing endpoint entity corresponding to an enquiring party awaits the joining of an endpoint entity corresponding to an assistant party.
- 30 10. The combination of claim 9, wherein the content-provider entity is automatically caused to leave the communication session upon the assistant party joining the session.

11. The combination of claim 9, wherein upon the assistant party joining the session, the content-provider entity remains in the session until explicitly dismissed by a said party.
12. The combination of claim 11, further comprising a transcription entity joined to the session with the content-provider entity to record the content delivered by the latter, the transcription entity being controllable by a said party to play back at least selected portions of the content delivered by the content provider entity.
13. The combination of claim 8, wherein the service-session functional entity comprises a session instance with generic behaviour for adding and removing endpoint entities to the communication session and for recording the endpoint entities currently joined to the communication session, and an associated service instance with service-specific behaviour determining when the session instance is to add and remove endpoint entities.
14. The combination of claim 8, wherein the state of connection of the content-provider entity to the transport mechanism is signalled to the session-service functional entity by leg messages passed between a leg controller of the entity manager of the content-provider entity and a corresponding leg controller of the service-session functional entity.